# RV BUSINESS

FROM THE EDITORS OF TL ENTERPRISES

NOVEMBER 1983 $2.00

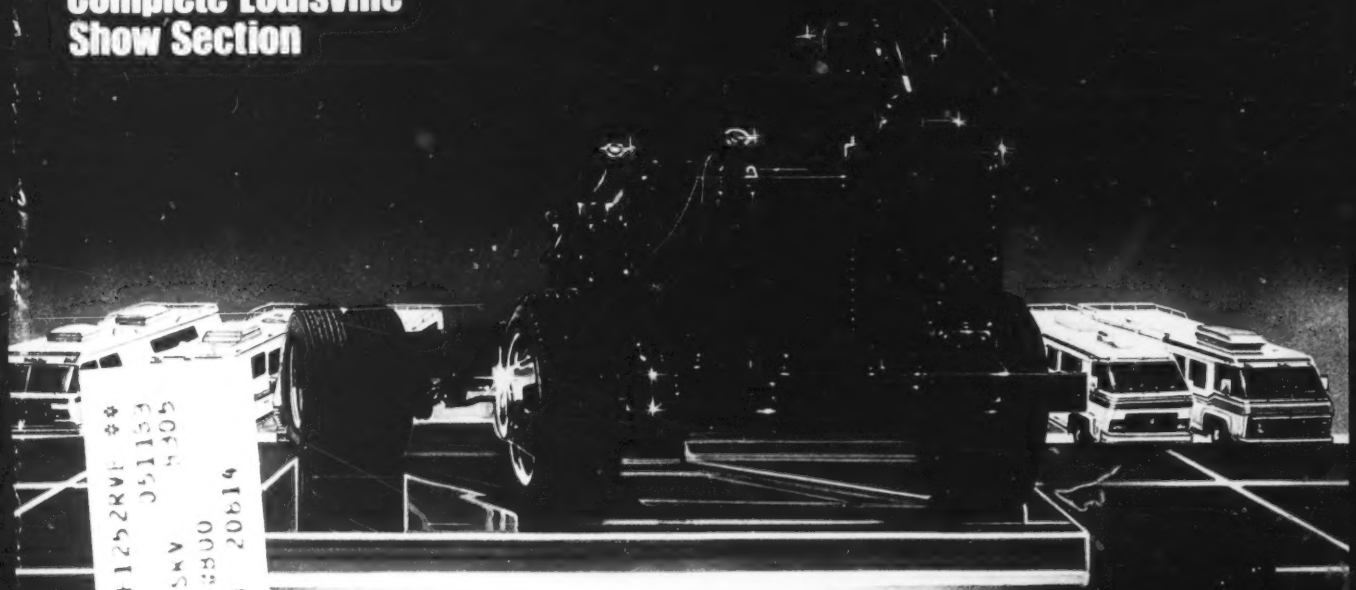
11/28/83
C895-24

**Tow Vehicles: 1984... And Beyond**

**Two-way Street Of Franchises**

**Viewing The European RV**

**Complete Louisville Show Section**



D25455 11/83 0000115412 52RVF **
CHRIS REALLY
CONGRESSIONAL IND SRV
9520 EAST WEST HWY #300
BETHESDA MD 20814

## THE BARE FACTS ON CHASSIS CHOOSING

# RV BUSINESS

A TL ENTERPRISES PUBLICATION

NOVEMBER 1983/VOL. 34, NO. 8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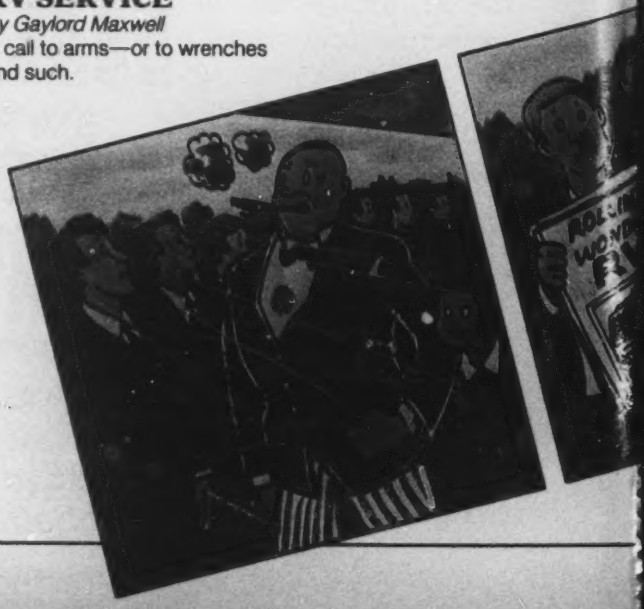

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**ON THE COVER:** Illustration by Hector Cademartori.

# PERSPECTIVE

**An analysis of RVB's monthly survey of its Dealer Advisory Board Members**

GAYLORD MAXWELL

Summer is winding down, but RV sales aren't. In August of this year, sales were up even more strongly than the average for the year-to-date. In dollars and in units, the figures are impressive. In terms of profits, the picture is still good although close-outs have generally brought down ratings a notch. However, a few dealers in each type indicate that their profits are still excellent, and a few indicate a drop from good to fair.

Used units are still moving well—particularly motorhomes. Profits have fallen a bit—from an overwhelming excellent to a mixed excellent to good.

| SALES VOLUME | | |
|---|---|---|
| For Month | This year $ 8,504,738 | +64% |
| | Last year $ 5,185,441 | |
| Year to Date | This year $61,513,474 | +48% |
| | Last year $41,616,428 | |

| TOTAL UNIT SALES | | |
|---|---|---|
| For Month | This year 689 | +23% |
| | Last year 561 | |
| Year to Date | This year 5062 | +21% |
| | Last year 4175 | |

| NEW UNIT SALES | | |
|---|---|---|
| For Month | This year 446 | +30% |
| | Last year 344 | |
| Year to Date | This year 3295 | +27% |
| | Last year 2586 | |

| USED UNIT SALES | | |
|---|---|---|
| For Month | This year 243 | +12% |
| | Last year 217 | |
| Year to Date | This year 1767 | +11% |
| | Last year 1589 | |

## MOTORHOMES

Sales of new units in August very nearly doubled those of last year. The already tremendous 74% rate of increase over the previous year jumped 14 percentage points for the month. The demand for motorhomes is picking up along with the economy.

The sale of used motorhomes jumped enormously during August for some unexplained reason. A better supply would help the market considerably. Prices in many areas are running well over book.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| NEW | For Month | This year 115 | +88% |
| | | Last year 61 | |
| | Year to Date | This year 841 | +74% |
| | | Last year 483 | |
| USED | For Month | This year 97 | +52% |
| | | Last year 64 | |
| | Year to Date | This year 600 | +12% |
| | | Last year 538 | |

## TRAVEL TRAILERS

There's no explanation for August's very slight drop of new unit sales of this type. Year-to-date, the figure is still reasonably good. Perhaps the unreasonably hot weather in much of the country held back families. Vacationing in temperatures exceeding 100 degrees F. isn't as appealing as vacationing when it's 80 degrees!

Although there doesn't seem to be a trend, some dealers are reporting an excess of used trailers.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| NEW | For Month | This year 114 | - 1% |
| | | Last year 115 | |
| | Year to Date | This year 824 | +22% |
| | | Last year 677 | |
| USED | For Month | This year 84 | - 15% |
| | | Last year 99 | |
| | Year to Date | This year 682 | +17% |
| | | Last year 582 | |

## CAMPING TRAILERS

This type hasn't enjoyed a fantastic increase in sales this year, but it took a nice jump in August. Most dealers tried to move their remaining stock by cutting prices; it worked.

Used units haven't done well this year. Part of the problem is that many dealers don't give much for trades, so private parties sell to other private parties. Dealers would do well to give this RV type a fair chance.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| NEW | For Month | This year 169 | +33% |
| | | Last year 127 | |
| | Year to Date | This year 1268 | +11% |
| | | Last year 1139 | |
| USED | For Month | This year 31 | - 9% |
| | | Last year 34 | |
| | Year to Date | This year 254 | - 10% |
| | | Last year 283 | |

## TRUCK CAMPERS

The unit figures aren't great, but the 50% increase in new camper sales for the month is impressive. It's slow, but this RV type is making a comeback. Part of the sales problem for campers has been that dealers don't offer them. Two members of the Dealer Advisory Board added them this year and are doing reasonably well.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| NEW | For Month | This year 24 | +50% |
| | | Last year 16 | |
| | Year to Date | This year 136 | +13% |
| | | Last year 120 | |
| USED | For Month | This year 18 | +20% |
| | | Last year 15 | |
| | Year to Date | This year 146 | + 7% |
| | | Last year 136 | |

## FIFTH-WHEELS

For the first time this year, new units dropped from the previous year. A drop of one isn't much, but after the very impressive record we've been seeing for the past year and a half, it's a bit surprising. However, the year-to-date increase of 35% generally speaks well for fivers. Δ

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| NEW | For Month | This year 24 | - 4% |
| | | Last year 25 | |
| | Year to Date | This year 226 | +35% |
| | | Last year 167 | |
| USED | For Month | This year 13 | +160% |
| | | Last year 5 | |
| | Year to Date | This year 85 | +70% |
| | | Last year 50 | |

# SHIPMENTS

## AFTERMARKET

| CATEGORY | NO. UNITS SOLD |
|---|---|
| Antenna | 1049 |
| Auxiliary Battery | 50 |
| Awning | 1322 |
| Battery Isolator | 756 |
| Fluorescent Lights | 1221 |
| Generator | 39 |
| Portable Barbecue | 52 |
| Portable Toilets | 788 |
| Roof Air-Conditioner | 1021 |
| Smoke Detector | 33 |
| Tire Carrier | 774 |
| Tire Pressure Gauge | 22 |
| Toilet Chemicals | 19,618 |
| Trailer Jacks | 1497 |
| Vacuum Cleaner | 3 |

In addition to the charted figures, the two other most frequently reported aftermarket items for the month of August '83 were 3M connectors (4500) and sewer hoses (3597). Other items included vents (500), fans (332), hitches (258), storage pods (215), horn buttons (200), and steps (59).

RVB is interested in making the Aftermarket figures work for you. Share your ideas with us as to how we can improve this service. Write to *RV Business*, 29901 Agoura Road, Agoura, California 91301.

## RVIA, AUGUST

The marketing committee of the Recreation Vehicle Industry Association has announced that the total number of recreational vehicles shipped from manufacturers' plants during August 1983 was 30,300, up 37.1% from August of 1982.

The shipment figures released by the association are contained in a report compiled for the membership by RVIA's marketing committee under the chairmanship of Allen Yoder Jr. of Jayco, Incorporated, Middlebury, Indiana.

| RV shipments were as follows in August 1983 | | August 1982 | Percent Change | Cumulative 1983 | Cumulative 1982 | Percent Change |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| TRAVEL TRAILERS | 5500 | 4100 | +34.1% | 52,200 | 38,700 | +34.9% |
| FIFTH-WHEELS | 1500 | 1000 | +50.0% | 12,100 | 8100 | +49.4% |
| TRUCK CAMPERS | 800 | 500 | +60.0% | 5300 | 4300 | +23.3% |
| MULTI-USE VEHICLES | 12,900 | 10,900 | +18.3% | 105,800 | 75,800 | +39.6% |
| TYPE A: MOTOR-HOMES | 3100 | 1700 | +82.3% | 21,700 | 13,100 | +65.6% |
| TYPE B: VAN CAMPERS | 200 | 300 | -33.3% | 3400 | 3000 | +13.3% |
| TYPE C: MINI MOTOR-HOMES | 3200 | 1600 | +100.0% | 21,200 | 13,100 | +61.8% |
| FOLDING CAMPING TRAILERS | 3100 | 2000 | +55.0% | 27,100 | 24,600 | +10.2% |
| TOTALS | 30,300 | 22,100 | +37.1% | 248,800 | 180,700 | +37.7% |